

Woodbury City Update

November/December 2020 • Volume 21, No. 10



*Woodbury develops tools for tree preservation.
Learn more in the Green Times insert.*

Public meeting on 2021 city budget scheduled Dec. 9

Woodbury's city budget for 2021, which will go before the City Council Dec. 9, proposes a 3.8 percent (or \$41) increase in city taxes on the median value home next year. The tax impacts of the proposed budget, as well as the programs and services supported by it, will be reviewed during the regular Council meeting Wednesday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m., at Woodbury City Hall. Residents are encouraged to attend the meeting remotely. A link to connect to the meeting will be available at woodburymn.gov/virtualmeetings. A mask must be worn by those who wish to attend the meeting in person, and seating will be arranged to accommodate physical distancing (chairs placed 6 feet apart).

The proposed total property tax levy of \$39,785,454 supports the cost of services and capital improvements in a growing community, according to City Administrator Clint Gridley.

Taxable market value

Woodbury's taxable market value grew by 5.9 percent from 2020 with the median value home increasing 4.2 percent. With the responsible tax levy increase and strong property tax value growth, the property tax rate is estimated to fall 0.7 percent.

City taxes

Gridley estimates that city taxes on a residential home valued at \$341,200

– the median value for taxes payable in 2021 – will increase from \$1,065 to \$1,106. See adjacent for the estimated city tax change on homes with higher and lower values than the median.

Gridley noted that market values do not increase or decrease by the same percentage for all properties. Therefore, the estimated city tax may differ for some, particularly if there have been improvements that add value, such as refinishing a basement or adding a three-season porch. Similarly, a larger decrease in value could cause a larger decrease in taxes.

General Fund budget

Property taxes help fund city operations in the General Fund, along with the Capital Improvement Fund, Emergency Medical Services Fund, Street Reconstruction/Maintenance Fund, Debt Service Funds, and Housing and Redevelopment Authority Fund, for example.

For 2021, the General Fund budget, which is the city's main operating fund, is recommended to be \$38,676,650, representing a 2.7 percent increase from 2020. The areas of new significant budget change in the General Fund compared to the current year are non-tax revenue; parks and trails maintenance; and personnel costs (see article page 3).

Property taxes at \$27.8 million account for 72 percent of the General Fund revenues. Other sources of revenue include permit fees, charges for various services, miscellaneous revenues, and transfers from other funds.

Total budget

Total city expenditures for 2021 are estimated at \$95.4 million, a 4.8 percent decrease compared to the adopted 2020 budget. The total includes the General Fund and other city funds, such as the water and sewer utility, Eagle Valley Golf Course, HealthEast Sports Center, and more.

Providing a good value

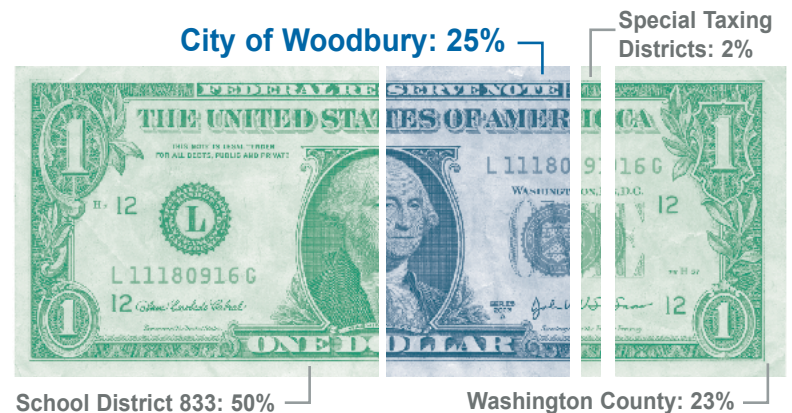
Under the proposed city budget, a homeowner with a property value estimated at \$341,200 for taxes pay-

able in 2021 receives police and fire protection; snow plowing and street maintenance; park development and maintenance; recreational programs and facilities; and many other services for about \$92.17 per month.

More information about the proposed 2021 city budget is available on the Woodbury website at woodburymn.gov/budget. The full budget document also can be reviewed at the Finance Department or at the R.H. Stafford Library, 8595 Central Park Place.

For more information, contact the Woodbury Finance Department at 651-714-3507.

Residential Property Tax Distribution



Examples of the estimated city tax increases for 2021

Estimated market value	2020 city tax	Estimated 2021 tax*	Increase/decrease
\$250,000	\$749	\$779	\$30
\$341,200**	\$1,065	\$1,106	\$41
\$350,000	\$1,097	\$1,138	\$41
\$450,000	\$1,439	\$1,487	\$48

*Estimates assume that homes have experienced a 4.2 percent increase in value.

**Median value as of Jan. 1, 2020.

Council Perspective

By Mayor Anne Burt

Honoring retiring Council member Amy Scoggins



Amy Scoggins

Amy Scoggins is wrapping up her 16th and final year on the Woodbury City Council. She will retire Dec. 31 as the longest-serving City Council member in the city's 53-year history. She announced earlier this year that she would not seek re-election.

We had just moved to town when Amy was elected to her first term on the City Council in 2004. I made a point of paying attention to what she said at meetings and how she conducted herself as a voice in our community. Fourteen years later, I started my first term as mayor and I have appreciated her counsel. She currently serves as mayor pro tem, which allows her to fulfill my role at meetings when I am not present. Her common sense reasoning and the institutional knowledge she gained during her four terms on the City Council will truly be missed.

I can't help but think of the hundreds of hours she has spent actively participating at City Council meetings, workshops, committee meetings, commission meetings and other community events and gatherings during her outstanding tenure. Not to mention the time she invested in reviewing and analyzing agendas, Council letters, attachments and memos in preparation of these meetings.

Public projects

The city completed several major capital improvement projects during Amy's tenure, including the 2019

Public Works Building expansion project; two expansion and remodels of City Hall; and the expansion of the outdoor fields at the sports center in 2009. Amy also served as co-chair of the Bielenberg Sports Center Expansion Project Task Force, planning for the expansion of the field house and addition of the outdoor recreational skating rink (opened in 2014) and outdoor splash pad (2015). She also helped facilitate the addition of Madison's Place universal playground at the sports center in 2016 (with the Madison Claire Foundation).

Also during Amy's tenure, the city partnered with the City of Cottage Grove and the State of Minnesota to open the Health and Emergency Response Occupations (HERO) Public Safety Training Center in Cottage Grove in January 2020. The facility primarily serves as a regional state-of-the-art immersive training center for police, fire and emergency medical services.

However, what stands out the most about Amy is the way and manner in which she served. She represented the residents of Woodbury with dignity in a genuine, caring way. Her harmonious nature made Council meetings productive, and she looked for areas of agreement and common ground with others.

Amy served with positivity, enthusiasm, integrity, diligence, thoroughness and, most importantly, compassion. She listens to residents, studies the issues, and makes informed decisions about what is best for the common good of Woodbury.

Amy excels in building relationships with residents, Council members and staff alike, and is oriented toward the big picture, whole community view. With her high commitment to our community and organizational growth and improvement, she continuously sought ways to improve our work and ways we deliver services to our residents, while seeking

to maximize the return on investment of the tax dollars we receive.

Honoring Amy

Typically, the city recognizes retiring long-time Council members by hosting a public gathering and program in their honor. Unfortunately, we are unable to do that safely at this time during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the city will be properly recognizing Amy at the Dec. 9 City Council meeting and through a video that will be distributed via the city's social media accounts, website, YouTube channel and InTouch email notification service. Please take some time to watch it.

Amy has resided in Woodbury since June 2000. She and husband Chip have three children, Megan, Spencer and Joe. They all deserve our gratitude for the sacrifices they have made to allow Amy the time to serve our community to the best of her ability. Good luck in your future endeavors, Amy!

'New' City Council

While it is sad to say goodbye to Amy, I'm also excited to welcome Kim Wilson, who was elected to the City Council Nov. 3 and will begin her first term in January (see related article on page 4). I also want to congratulate current Council member Andrea Date, who was re-elected to her second term on Election Day. I'm looking forward to working with our "new" City Council, including current Council members Steve Morris and Jennifer Santini, on a lot of important work that needs to be done in 2021.

Winter parking regulations

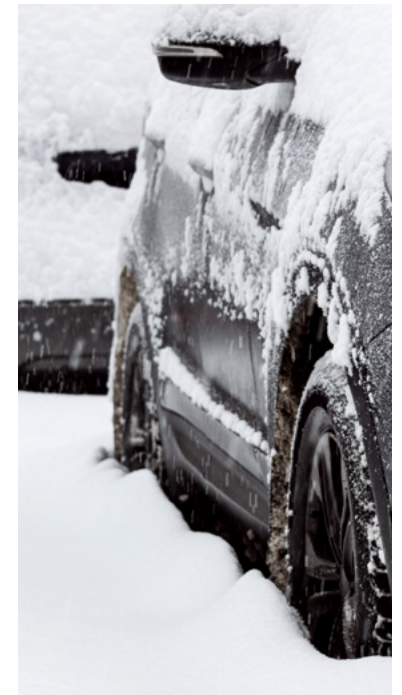
Woodbury's winter parking restrictions are now in effect. City ordinance prohibits on-street parking:

- Between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. from Nov. 1 through April 1 or
- Any time 2 or more inches of snow has accumulated

In addition, city ordinance requires vehicles parked in driveways to not extend beyond the driveway and into the street or obstruct a trail or sidewalk. This helps the plow operators do the most thorough job possible.

Residents and businesses who do not comply with the winter parking regulations may be cited for violating city code and fined.

The ordinance applies only to public streets, not to private roadways. Questions about winter parking regulations should be directed to the Public Works Department at 651-714-3720 or publicworks@woodburymn.gov.



The Woodbury newsletter is published 10 times per year by the City of Woodbury and mailed to all residents and businesses. Send comments to: Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125-3330. Phone: 651-714-3500. Email: jason.egerstrom@woodburymn.gov.

Mayor: Anne Burt. Council Members: Andrea Date, Steve Morris, Jennifer Santini and Amy Scoggins. City Administrator: Clint Gridley. Communications Manager: Jason Egerstrom.

The City of Woodbury is subject to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In accordance with the act, the Woodbury newsletter is available in other formats. Call Jason Egerstrom, 651-714-3500; TDD: 651-714-3568.

2021 budget highlights

City Administrator Clint Gridley says impacts from the global pandemic, changes in our public safety service structure, and costs for the drinking water provision and personnel are four of the primary factors shaping the proposed 2021 city budget. The city's operating budget is proposed to be \$95.4 million for 2021, a 4.8 percent decrease from 2020.

Property tax levy changes

The proposed total property tax levy is the largest and perhaps most visible source of revenue for the city, providing 42 percent of its funding needs. If approved, city taxes on the median value home of \$341,200 are estimated to increase by 3.8 percent or \$41. The monthly cost of property tax funded city services to a median value home for 2021 is proposed to be \$92.17.

A few of the more significant factors affecting the proposed 2021 budget and, in particular, the property tax amount are:

1. Service Demands of a Growing Community – The population and properties served by the city continue to grow. Simultaneously, Woodbury has experienced continued strong property value growth. Each year since 2013, the growth in the tax base has

exceeded the tax levy increase and has resulted in lower tax rates. With the proposed levy, the city tax capacity rate can accordingly fall by 0.7 percent. Including the 2021 budget, the tax rate will have fallen 18.2 percent since 2013. Nevertheless, the city is challenged to carefully manage taxing expectations of the community with the growth of service demands, particularly in a pandemic and economically-challenged environment.

2. Personnel costs – As an organization that provides services, employee wages and benefits routinely account for at least 75 percent of the general fund annual budget. This trend will continue in 2021, with personnel costs being the largest factor affecting the budget. Historically, budgeted personnel additions have been restrained despite a growing community, and presently the employees per capita is at one of its lowest points. One of the more significant personnel changes will be in Public Safety, where they will begin cross-training paramedics to also serve as firefighters. In total, there is a proposed net increase of 1.38 full-time employees for 2021.

3. Flat or declining non-tax revenues – While the city's largest forms of revenue - local property tax and utility service fee revenues - are proposed to have a modest change for the coming fiscal year, the city is experiencing significant weakening of its other forms of non-tax revenues. In particular, investment income, development-related revenues, municipal

state transportation aid (Capital Project Fund), recreation revenues (General Fund and Enterprise Fund), ambulance billings (Special Revenue Fund) and other sources of revenue have been negatively impacted by the economy. With some of these revenue sources directly impacting the General Fund, it has resulted in a lower 2.7 percent General Fund expenditure increase despite an overall 4.9 percent property tax increase in order to accommodate for the decline in non-tax revenues.

4. Street reconstruction – One of the annual larger increases in the total 2021 budget is associated with supporting street reconstruction activities. Per a long-term funding plan recommended by a citizens task force that studied the city's road maintenance schedule and developed a sustainable long-term funding plan to meet the needs outlined in the maintenance plan, the annual property tax levy will grow by 5.5 percent annually, resulting in a \$200,905 increase for street reconstruction in 2021.

User fee rates

The Water and Sewer Utility Fund is being challenged by three factors: lower water demand due to successive cool and wet lawn watering seasons; the success of our water efficiency program, and an increase in infrastructure replacement activity. Therefore, proposed water and city sewer fee increases are needed to help cover costs. If approved by the City Council, the base water rate will increase by 20 cents per thousand gallons from \$1.40 to \$1.60 per thousand gallons and the commercial and homeowner association (HOA) irrigation rate will increase from \$2.95 to \$3.18 per thousand gallons. A \$2 per quarter increase in the administrative fixed fee for water also is proposed. The proposed commercial and HOA irrigation rate increase reflects the fifth step of a five-step increase plan approved by the City Council in 2016.

In term of other enterprise rates, the city's portion of the sanitary sewer fixed quarterly fee is proposed to increase \$1.13 per quarter. The storm

Monthly Cost To Residents

Police protection	\$26.57
Fire and EMS	\$8.26
Public Works operations and street reconstruction	\$22.06
Parks, trails, recreation	\$13.09
Debt service	\$7.39
Administrative services	\$14.22
Housing and redevelopment	\$0.58

TOTAL \$92.17

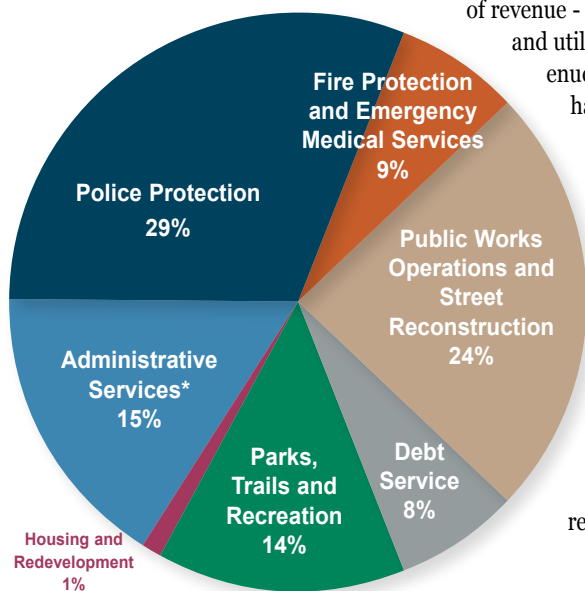
Monthly price is the 2021 projected cost for a home with an estimated market value of \$341,200 for taxes payable in 2021.

Note: Fees collected for inspections, planning and engineering services cover operating expenditures, resulting in no impact to the tax levy.

sewer rate for single-family homes/duplexes/twin homes will increase from \$19.88 to \$20.50 per quarter. The ambulance fee and street lighting rates are proposed to remain the same in 2021.

HRA levy

The city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is proposing no change to the levy to fund several loan programs for current and prospective homeowners in Woodbury who meet the income guidelines. This is separate from the city's tax levy and is included on the truth-in-taxation notice in the listing for special taxing districts. The proposed levy totals \$250,000, the same as for 2020; the tax impact is an estimated \$7 for the median value home and is included in the estimated tax chart on page 1. The tax levy for the HRA has not changed since 2011.



Note: Development control operating expenditures are covered by service fees and do not impact the tax levy. Development control includes planning, economic development, building inspections and engineering.

**Administrative services include elections, finance, assessing, communications, human resources, building maintenance, information technology and general administration.*

Strong financial standing

The city strives to maintain a sound financial standing through its prudent fiscal management and reporting. As a result, Woodbury holds the AAA bond rating from Standard & Poor's, the highest available rating. This allows the city to borrow money at the lowest rates, saving taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. Woodbury is one of only 27 Minnesota cities that have earned the top rating from Standard & Poor's.



Budget meeting set for Dec. 9

Page 1



Options to protect East Metro water

Clean Water Insert



Save money and stay warm

Green Times Insert

Postal Patron
Woodbury, MN

New Year's Eve Family Celebration canceled

The New Year's Eve Family Celebration, held annually at HealthEast Sports Center (HSC), is canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can receive updates about current and upcoming recreation program offerings by visiting woodburyrecreation.com, subscribing to the city's InTouch email notification system or following the Parks and Recreation Department on Facebook at facebook.com/WoodburyParkRec. The city will not mail a winter/spring programs brochure due to the limited programming it is able to offer at this time.

Questions should be directed to Woodbury Parks and Recreation at 651-714-3583 or reconline@woodburymn.gov.

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Date re-elected; Wilson wins other Council seat

Woodbury voters elected Andrea Date and Kim Wilson to fill two positions on the Woodbury City Council on Nov. 3. Both will begin four-year terms in January.

Date, 37, is a quantitative research manager with Ravel, a women-owned market research consulting firm. She received 10,801 votes, leading the field. Prior to joining the City Council in 2017, Date served on the Woodbury Parks and Natural Resources Commission and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Task Force. She has a bachelor's degree in American studies from Carleton College and a master's degree in natural resources science and management from the University of Minnesota. Date and her husband Max have lived in Woodbury

since 2011. They have two children, Damien and Abigail.

Wilson, 53, is a full-time stay-at-home mom who has homeschooled her children for the past 15 years. She received 9,568 votes to win the second Council seat. Prior to staying at home to raise her family, she was a freelance court reporter throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. Wilson has been an active volunteer in the community and has attended many City Council meetings and workshops over the past five years. She grew up in Cottage Grove and graduated from Woodbury High School in 1985. Wilson moved back to Woodbury in 1993. She and her husband Greg have five children, Ben, Maggie, Charlie, Tommy, and Hannah.



Andrea Date



Kim Wilson

Andrea Date and Kim Wilson emerged as winners from a field of eight candidates seeking Council positions. Date was re-elected to a second term on the Council and Wilson will assume the seat being vacated by Amy Scoggins, who did not seek re-election (see mayor's column on page 2).